

Public Speaking at Area Planning Panels/Regulatory & Appeals Committee

How can I find out if I will have the opportunity to speak at Panel/Committee?

If you have commented on a planning application and it requires a Panel or Regulatory Committee decision, wherever possible we will write to you to notify you of the date the application will be considered, 7 days in advance of the meeting.

The agenda is published 5 working days before the meeting and is normally available to view at your local planning office or on the Council's website soon after at: www.bradford.gov.uk/planningpanel.

Do I need to attend the meeting to make any comments known to the Panel/Committee?

No as your written comments will have been summarised in the Officer's report. If you do not wish to speak at the meeting you may still attend to see what happens. It would be helpful though if you notify the Committee Officer of the item you are interested in on your arrival at the Committee room.

When and where are the Planning Panel/Regulatory Committee meetings held?

There are 3 Planning Panels; Bradford, Keighley and Shipley which each meet on a monthly basis. The Regulatory and Appeals Committee also meets on a monthly basis.

The dates, times and location of meetings can be obtained from Committee Secretariat on 01274 432268 and are also available on the Council's website, details as above.

How do I arrange to speak at the meeting?

On arrival at the Committee room you should first report to the Committee Officer to notify them of your wish to speak on a particular application and whether you wish to support or oppose it. The Panel/Committee will then try to deal with the item as early as possible so that you will not be unduly delayed. However, you should be aware that if there are a number of items on the agenda it may be some time before the item you are interested in is heard. You may leave the meeting once your item has been heard.

Who can speak at the meeting?

Attendees may only speak with the permission, and at the absolute discretion of, the Chair of the Panel/Committee. Usually one objector and one person in support of the application, either the applicant or agent will be allowed to speak at the meeting. If there are several objectors and/or supporters who wish to speak on an application each group will need to organise a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. Each side will be normally allowed no more than 5 minutes to make his or her case.

Ward Councillors and Parish Council representatives can also speak.

Even if you have indicated that you wish to speak you can still change your mind during the meeting.

What happens at the meeting?

Planning applications where individuals have expressed a preference to speak or an interest will be considered first.

A Planning Officer will introduce each application by describing the proposed development, the recommendation and giving a short presentation, drawing attention to the issues contained in the written report and adding any additional late information.

Ward Councillors and/or a representative of any relevant Parish or Town Council may then address the Planning Panel/Committee on behalf of objectors, the applicant or any other interested party.

One representative of the objector(s) and the applicant / supporter(s) may then be invited to speak for five minutes each

It is necessary to limit the time allowed for public speaking in order to ensure that each application is dealt with consistently and fairly and that the committee runs smoothly. The Chair may agree in exceptional circumstances however to extend the time allowed by parties to speak. In such cases the Chair will inform the speakers when introducing the item.

The Chair will not normally allow you to make additional points even in response to those raised by other parties nor will speakers be questioned by Councillors or Officers.

The Planning Officers will answer any questions of clarification. Members of the Panel/Committee will then debate the item and resolve to approve, refuse or defer until later in the day or a future date for further information, legal advice or a site visit.

Any site visits will usually take place on the day of the meeting and decisions will be taken on the Panel's/Committee's return to the Committee room. Site visits are treated as a continuation of the planning meeting. A Planning Officer will usually outline the key facts about the application and answer any technical questions raised by members. Objectors and other interested parties are not permitted to speak directly to the panel during site visits.

Delegated Authority may also be given to the Head of Development Services to deal with the application following further negotiation or amendments.

What should I include in my presentation?

You are strongly advised to read the Officer's report on the application before deciding to speak and what to include in your presentation. As previously stated the report is available at Council Offices or on the Council's website shortly after.

It is recommended that you be as brief as possible and focus on the relevant planning issues.

What issues are relevant?

There is no exhaustive list of material planning considerations, but the following issues are likely to be relevant in most cases:-

- Unitary Development Plan
- Government Planning Policy Guidance
- Case law and precedent
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Considerations of highway safety
- Residential amenity
- Noise, disturbance and smells
- Design, appearance and layout
- Impact on trees, listed buildings and conservation areas
- Human Rights

What issues are not relevant?

- Matters covered by other legislation
- Boundary or access disputes
- Morality or personal opinion
- Loss of views
- Effects on property value
- Landownership
- Speculation about future developments
- Reputation of the applicant

Additional Useful Information

You should not forget that the laws of slander are very strict. If you say something defamatory about a person in public that is untrue, even if you believe it to be true you may be at risk of legal action.

If you wish to attend the meeting and have special access needs and require assistance, please let Committee Secretariat know as soon as possible. They can be contacted on 01274 432268.

You should also note that when there are a large number of applications to be discussed there may be a break for lunch.

These Advice Notes are available in large print and braille on request.

AUGUST 2007